

30 Years OF LOVE, SUSTAINABILITY AND COOPERATION Compact

NEHEMIAH GATEWAY'S Newsletter

November 2021

Dear friends,

30 years of Nehemiah Gateway! A great anniversary. In 1991, when it all began, no one could have dreamed a story like this. From relief supplies that were meant to alleviate the stark need in Albania, an organization grew steadily that today belongs to Albania as a natural part of society. It became a part of the country with deep roots.

Sharing joy and sorrow with the people on site and living with them. To help where the need is greatest. Providing material and spiritual support. And empowering people. This is NG's motto: helping and empowering people to sustainably shape and determine their lives in dignity and independence.

It has lost none of its freshness. It inspires the education of young people from all over the world. In their home countries they will build something brand new for themselves and their communities. Congratulations - here's to the next 30 years!

Anke Neuzerling

Chair of the NG Advisory Board



Albania 1991: People are longing for food - and for orientation in a confusing new world.

Solid Foundations Can Weather Storms

**Nehemiah Gateway's 30 year history
of building and rebuilding**

The story of Nehemiah Gateway is a story about building, and rebuilding. It is a story about a foundation established carefully, over many years, and about sheltering walls and open doors. It is the story of the transformative work of a dedicated and diverse group of people, and of lives changed along the way. It is the story of inspiration, and of people who started out receiving aid and are now helping others themselves.

When he came to Albania for the first time in 1991, Arnold Geiger found a country shaken at its very foundations. After almost fifty years of isolationist, xenophobic communist rule, Albanians were disoriented and hungry, in an unfamiliar world.



Nov. 1991 - Arnold Geiger with Peter Graf for the first time in Pogradec.



Operation 24 - 24,000 aid parcels for every family in Pogradec



Daily prayer meetings in the handball stadium

AID

He recognized that simply to drop off aid supplies and leave would not solve anything. In November 1991, Arnold Geiger made it his life's mission to help Albanians rebuild their country, crossing the North Macedonian border and moving into the southeastern city of Pogradec, on the shore of Lake Ohrid.

He returned in January 1992 bearing aid—the first of many trucks full of food, clothes, coats, and shoes, toys, and even bicycles. These life-saving donations, coming at a time when Albanians had so little, were provided by friends in Germany who gave money, supplies, and their own time driving to Albania.

Andy Ardüser was one of a generation of teens and young adults who helped. "A lot of quite young people in the church got commercial driver's licenses," she remembers. "Truck companies would let us use their trucks but wouldn't supply a driver—so we did it ourselves." Once the trucks reached Albania, the aid had to be

delivered and the trucks turned around within 24 hours. Poverty at that time in Albania was so extreme, a truck from Germany left standing for too long was likely to lose all its components.

Early donors Ludwig and Edith Köcher remember coming to Pogradec with aid deliveries in those earliest days. "We knew Albania was poor," Ludwig observes, "but we didn't know how poor until we were there. People then could get by with so little. There was no trash anywhere in those days because people found a use for anything, even a little piece of string. Under communism, nobody knew what they would be able to get tomorrow, so they saved everything. And they could repair anything! Car repairs that you would send to a shop in Germany could be managed somehow using the smallest things."

Aid deliveries were for everyone in Pogradec. Ludwig and Edith remember "Operation 24", an early mission in which every person in town received an aid bundle within a 24 hour period. Deliveries were carefully coordinated, with a series of collection sites so that crowds at each location could be managed. In each box was food, clothing, shoes, and a Bible.

Everybody in Pogradec got those bundles—including many people who later became part of the NG family. Elis Tarelli, then a boy of 12, remembers vividly the new pair of Reeboks he got in one of those aid bundles. He still smiles thinking about them. "They were the first good shoes I ever owned," he remembers. "They were big on me at first, but I was growing. And they weren't practical in the snow, but I didn't care, I wore them anyway."

VALUES

NG was rooted in Christian values, and along with humanitarian aid, it offered, but never required, opportunities to learn about and live with the faith. At one time, the local church had over 300 active members and was among the largest in Albania. There was a real curiosity about religion in those days. Communist Albania had been an atheist state, with religious leaders of all faiths executed or imprisoned by the Hoxha regime. There was also a broader curiosity about foreigners, after so many years cut off from the rest of the world.

Missionaries know that bringing people to church isn't always the same thing as bringing people to Jesus.

And yet, getting people in the door is a first step even if it is the only step for some people. NG's mission in Albania has always been rooted in values, not only in the sense of fostering a religion, but also in modeling unconditional love and compassion, regardless of people's situations and beliefs. As Herolinda Shkullaku, Executive Director of NG Albania, puts it,

"I learned from Arnold to start with people by trusting them, rather than starting out skeptical and making them earn my trust. It's not the Albanian way... but it's my way now."

EMPOWERMENT

The early years of NG included investments in the Pogradec economy. Humanitarian aid and spiritual inspiration were not enough to repair broken infrastructure. Enterprises including an auto repair shop, a woodworking shop, dental clinic, and a bakery fell under the wing of NG, along with an array of fledgling civil society organizations and enterprises, some still active today.

DESTRUCTION

In 1997, the collapse of unregulated financial schemes led to widespread, violent rioting throughout Albania. Communist-era caches of munitions in the countryside were raided, and a terrifying quantity of weapons made their way into the hands of Albanian rioters. An estimated two thousand people were killed. Many new businesses and institutions were looted and destroyed, including NG's young enterprises. Most foreigners left the country, but the NG team stayed, watching as their work was destroyed and the people they had been striving to inspire to generosity and compassion raged and wrought havoc.

Manjola Kamolli, who joined the church as a university student and is now Vice Executive Director and Head of Legal Issues for NG Albania, remembers that the violence was still going on during the Geigers' wedding anniversary. "Some of us young people in the church were determined to make it nice for them, even though things were so bad, because they were still here. We got a bucket of roses from a shopkeeper who had moved his inventory home for safekeeping.



1996: Soup kitchen for needy children



Nehemia's model bakery in 1996



Bombs explode during the national unrest in 1997

We walked all the way to Buçimas, carrying the roses. The streets were like a war zone, and we had to be very careful. They were so surprised and happy." In remembering 1997, Arnold Geiger uses imagery from nature.

"That time—it was like plowing the fields to prepare for a new planting,"

he observes. And NG planted anew after 1997. Alongside the church, soup kitchen, and medical services came a new emphasis on education. In 1998, Nehemia School launched in response to the instability and inconsistent quality of public schools in Albania.

In the soup kitchen, coworkers realized that the Roma children who were coming in for lunch couldn't read or write. A "Class of Hope" offered free education to Roma children as part of Nehemia School. The Class of Hope became Amaro Tan, which was run by Youth With A Mission until 2008, when Arnold Geiger was asked to continue it under the wing of NG.

REFUGEES

During the 1998-9 Kosovo conflict, some 200,000 Kosovar Albanians were expelled from their homes and fled to Albania. The border crossing with North Macedonia near Pogradec was a major entry point, and some 3,000 refugees stayed in Pogradec until they could go home. NG was part of a coalition of community partners called the "Pogradec Encouragement Project" that worked together to provide not only food and shelter, but childcare, spiritual, medical, and social services, and support in reconnecting separated families.

Executive Director Herolinda Shkullaku says that

Albania's willingness to take in so many people in danger and need "is something that Albania can always be proud of."



Refugees from Kosovo in one of NG's makeshift camps



The church became a shelter for hundreds of refugees.



NG University graduation 2021

Bob Baker came to Albania as part of an American church response to the Kosovo refugee crisis. He notes that the refugees went home as soon as they possibly could, because Albania was so poor at that time. It is a testament to the legendary hospitality of Albanians that they unhesitatingly opened their doors to the refugees when they themselves had so little.

THE 2000s

The 2000s were years of building on foundations laid in the 1990s. Albania had substantially stabilized. Nehemia School became a highly regarded private school with over 400 pupils, ages 3-18, Amaro Tan had over 100 students from kindergarten to 9th grade, and hundreds of people were receiving humanitarian, social, and medical support every year. Many talented young Albanians who started as volunteers and translators moved on to leadership in NG and other organizations. Herolinda Shkullaku, who started out as a translator, became Executive Director of NG Albania in 2012, a rare female executive director in a patriarchal society. She always carries a silver key fob in the shape of a person, passed on by Arnold Geiger to represent the people in her care.

EXPANSION

In the 2000s, that investment in people broadened and deepened. NG's new university on the Buçimas campus greeted its first class of students in 2010 and in 2013 welcomed international scholarship students from a handful of target countries in Africa and Central America. These students were selected for their ability and desire to be multipliers of prosperity and inspiration. "They are the ones who can bring lasting change to their societies," as Arlinda Merdani, Head of NG Global Operations, explains. Other projects with international partners have allowed NG to help like-minded organizations broaden their impact.

At the same time, identifying volunteers, donors, and friends is a global project, and NG has been both fortunate and strategic in finding and keeping dedicated groups of volunteers and donors in Europe, the US, and elsewhere. As Kai Uellendahl, Member of the Board of Partners and Executive Director of NG Switzerland, says, "It is about bringing people together, and providing a place where they can meet. NG finds people who can contribute their talents and brings them together."

VILLAGE AID

Although Albania has improved since 1991, many needs are unmet. Mountain villages that were supported under Communism have become isolated islands. Those who remain are stranded by disability, sickness, or age, and NG is a lifeline. Many NG staff identify trips to the villages as one of the most satisfying things they have done in their work. The village aid program offers a glimpse of Albania's poorest and shows the impact not only of their generosity but also their compassion. Gian Paul Ardüser, who has served as pastor and executive director, and now works as a guidance counselor for the students at Nehemiah Gateway University, muses that "maybe the context of the Bible is closer to Albania than Germany?"

IMPROVEMENT

Contemporary Albanian society still faces many challenges, and people with troubles that are medical, material, and spiritual. At the same time, it is moving toward a brightening future, with possible EU accession on the horizon. There is improvement, too, in Pogradec's gorgeous natural environment. Hunting restrictions have allowed birds to start returning to Lake Ohrid, and the forests are recovering from years when a cold and hungry population cut down all the trees just to stay warm.



OF LOVE,
SUSTAINABILITY
AND COOPERATION

At thirty years, NG has established institutions on a foundation of honesty, inspiration, respect, forgiveness, compassion, and integrity. It has changed the lives of tens of thousands of people in Albania and beyond and continues to provide life-changing aid to thousands more every year. This is a small glimpse at a few of the volunteers, staff, and friends who have committed a part of their lives to this work. Visit, and you will meet many more. NG is a story about building sheltering walls and open doors, but most of all, it is a story about people.



Manjola Kamolli brings aid to a village home.



Kindergarten kids have fun at Amaro Tan School.



Beautiful Lake Ohrid and the organic permaculture gardening project

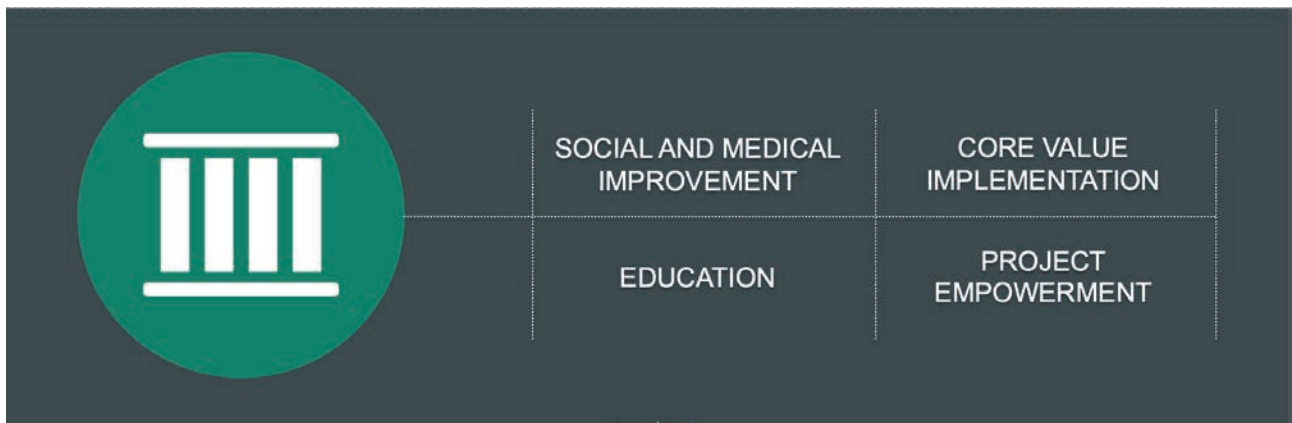


The sunflower - NG's symbol for growth and fruit

What's in a Name?

Names change over time. Until 2010, NG was known as Nehemia Foundation. For the sake of clarity, we refer to the organization as NG throughout the article—even in referring to times when it was still called Nehemia.

Do you have an NG story? The Compact team recognizes that this article presents the experiences of a tiny fraction of NG's organizational family. We wish we could have talked to everybody! We'd love to hear from you. sarah.pita@ng.team



From a Charity Startup to an International Organization

Arnold Geiger introduces key partners in the development of NG

30 years of charity, sustainability and cooperation ... these goals remain unchanged from the early days, but today they represent an international work that has passed through important stages of development. Arnold Geiger explains:

The Christian Relief Organization Nehemia in Nidda and its charismatic leader Waldemar Sardaczuk had an important function at the beginning. They sent us out as a family, took responsibility for coordination and operations, and contributed many resources. They became more than namesakes, but virtually the mother organization for Nehemia Albania. Even though NG has long been independent today, we are still connected with gratitude.

Over the years NG has developed somewhat differently than most organizations with similar orientation. One important reason: many experienced and successful professionals from all areas of society advised and helped us. This made structured growth possible. What began as emergency aid soon developed into a comprehensive program of „help for self-help“.

Spontaneously, I can think of three personalities who have made a very decisive contribution to the further development of our organization: Alfred Wenig, Erich Stamminger and Paul Donders.

Paul Donders advised our management team for many years, providing important impulses, especially in critical phases of organizational development. This enabled us to overcome many a crisis unscathed. Even today, his seminars are part of the tools of the trade for the next generation of managers.

Alfred Wenig had a strong personal influence on me. It is impossible to imagine NG history without him, and not only because he appointed NG his heir after passing away in January 2009, thus opening up completely new possibilities for us, even beyond the grave. Alfred broadened my horizons with his vast knowledge and often unconventional thinking. His wise sayings continue to shape NG today. „No one knows as much as everyone.“ „There is nothing good unless you do it.“ - to name just two examples. His emphasis on responsibility for our fellow man, his view of Israel and the community have shaped me. „Church comes from community“, we should never forget that. Even Alfred's great concern for organic farming in times of climate change, once widely ridiculed, has a whole new relevance today. The new permaculture project in Albania, which Arnold's son Samuel is building up with a lot of heart and enthusiasm, bears Alfred's signature.

Erich Stamminger is another key person who has left his mark. He entered the picture in 2008, when a whole new phase of expansion was dawning for NG.



Herolinda Shkullaku with Waldemar Sardaczuk, a man from the first hour.

This required a good, powerful strategy. And in the field of strategy development, we probably couldn't have found anyone with more experience. As a member of the adidas Executive Board, he proved this every day, and the success proved him right.

With the new strategy we developed with Erich's help, the former Nehemia Albania soon got a new name: Nehemiah Gateway. And a new logo. A gate that symbolizes the fitting together of the city wall around ancient Jerusalem, built by the Old Testament personage Nehemiah. The gate gives protection, but also allows openness and interaction. And it brings hope and light. A fitting symbol for our work.

The new strategy represents a crucial transition: NG Albania went from being a mere recipient to a giving organization. Since 2012, responsibility for the work in Albania has been in Herolinda Shkullaku's capable hands, and for many young people from Southeastern Europe, Latin America and Africa, NG Albania and the NG University are a place that opens new perspectives for the future.

With the new, international orientation, new NG entities came into being. Today, all threads run together in the NG Services office in Nuremberg. There are NG Albania, NG USA, NG Switzerland and the office in Berlin. Beautiful Hotel Lindenhof and the Mohab GmbH are now also part of the NG Team and, in the long term, will generate income for NG's overall work. So, the strategy of growth has worked.

My own role has changed in recent years. In the past, I was almost exclusively working in the operational and conceptual areas. Today, my role is to make sure that as many people as possible are given the opportunity



Alfred Wenig had an important role in NG's history.

to do the operational work themselves; that they get the means to do so and actively contribute to shaping the next steps in organizational development. Today, I am a coordinator and motivator."

As with the potatoes we distributed in the villages of Albania in the early days, it is with all our resources: what is not eaten (consumed) must be put in the ground - as an investment in the future.

"What inspires me about NG is your total dedication to a healthy future for Albania. And your dedication is not just in words, but in lived quality and love in all the projects you build and develop. You are a shining tower, completely in the tradition of the German Herrnhuters, who have also been building new villages all over the world for 275 years and have thus left a deep and appreciative mark on society. You have my respect and appreciation!"

Paul Donders

"Arnold and the entire team have done an outstanding job in helping the people in Albania. The concept of „helping people to help themselves“ excited me right from the start. The commitment that Arnold, his family and his team demonstrated on a daily basis was exemplary. There was only one consequence for me: to extend the work to other countries and continents in order to reach even more people with this help. Looking at today's results I am truly pleased."

Erich Stamminger



Esther Geiger - NG's Queen of Hospitality

When Esther Geiger was 11 years old, her family went on a rare beach vacation to Yugoslavia. "I decided then," she laughs, "that I would live in the south when I grew up." Many of us make such pronouncements as children, but she did it—although the way it happened, and the experiences she has had, have been far different than anything she might have imagined. When Arnold Geiger felt the call in 1991 to go to Albania and help its people rebuild, the whole family went—Esther and three young children, with a fourth on the way.

Thirty years of guests have been housed and fed and enjoyed the hospitality of the Geiger family in Albania, and virtually all of them have met Esther, with her kind and generous heart, her abundant gardens, and an ever-changing menagerie of animals. Esther admits that the constant flow of guests can feel overwhelming at times. For children, especially, quiet "family-only" time can be hard to come by. At the same time, growing up in a richly multi-lingual and multicultural environment has brought a great deal of benefit. Today, Arnold and Esther's young grandchildren easily switch back and forth between English, German, and Albanian, sometimes within the same sentence, and are comfortable around all sorts of people. (Read also the children's own retrospective on page 10.)

In the earliest days, living in a rented house in downtown Pogradec with no kitchen and running water only in the bathroom, and with even the most basic supplies hard to procure, the Geiger family always found room

for guests. "I was always cooking," Esther remembers. "Of course, I had help, but I was always cooking. And washing dishes. The children were homeschooling at the same time." Although their first house only had two bedrooms for the entire family, they would all pile in together to make the other room available for their guests.

A singsong chorus of "Linnnn-DAH, Linnnn-DAH! E-VA! E-VA" would start outside 7 am, and not end until 11 at night, as the neighborhood children called and called for the Geiger girls to come out and play. The neighborhood children had almost nothing—not even shoes for their feet in winter. Esther made sure they got some donated shoes—which their parents promptly turned around and sold, so that the children still needed shoes. Arnold remembers this as the beginning of the NG's aid parcel program, which still supplies food, clothing, and shoes to people in need today.

Esther, who had also dreamed of being a farmer as a child, began taking in animals almost as soon as they moved to Albania. They started out with chickens and, for a time, rabbits. The dogs and cats also found them quickly. Esther has adopted dozens of cats and dogs over the years, taking them to the veterinarian to be spayed or neutered at her own expense. As of this fall, two dogs and a rotating cast of opinionated cats spend their time in the peaceful sanctuary of the NG campus at Buçimas.

The turmoil that seized Albania in March 1997 caused



Esther with one of dozens of cats she adopted over the years.



1996: The big table in the wooden house in Buçimas where Esther welcomed thousands of guests and co-workers.

most foreigners to leave the country. Violence and looting were everywhere. Many fledgling investments in a new Albania were wantonly destroyed. Still, the Geiger family stayed. "The commitment we made to the Albanian people by coming here, that meant we really felt we had to stay. Especially because things were bad," Esther says. She remembers being shut up in the house with their small children, staying away from the windows and hearing gunshots and explosions outside. The trauma and darkness of that time left a lasting impression that still upsets Esther when she thinks of it. "That was when we began to move towards education programs," she observes. "How else can you keep something like that from happening again?"

Today, the extended Geiger family has created a home that has plenty of room for guests, including a separate guest house, but also has private space for the family. Esther is peaceful and confident managing these overlapping spheres. The challenges of a global organization have built a new equilibrium, with a new generation of leadership continuing the work in Albania. Lately, Esther has been enjoying working with her son, Sam, on his organic garden by the lake. "I like how he is working with students from Nehemia School on the land. He's teaching them how to care for the earth, and really to understand it. It has potential to make a real difference."



1992: No sink, no space, but everybody is welcome! Brigitte Weber, one of the first co-workers, helps in Esthers first 'kitchen'.

LETTERS FROM ALBANIA

At a time before Internet, when even telephone calls to Germany rarely worked, Esther wrote many letters - handwritten testimonies of a turbulent time when, against all odds, she did not lose her sense of humor. Here are a few glimpses from her original letters in 1993:

You can't imagine how complicated everything is here. 2-3 times every day we have to carry a canister full of water to the kitchen, and in the morning the water runs only very weakly. So it's always wait, wait, wait. Of course, you can't do the laundry either. And when there is enough water pressure, then the gamble with electricity begins. When the washing machine is running, there's no way to do the cooking or turn on the heater. I cook the food mostly on the wood stove. Arnold always says that the food only tastes so good because he always stokes the stove so well in the morning. "Well stoked is half cooked" That's just like him, ha, ha.

The neighbors' kids are always knocking on the door, sometimes every 5 minutes. Plus, lots of other people come in wanting something from us. Sometimes I could just stand at the door to open and close it. Because by tradition you must always offer coffee, sometimes all I do is making coffee and washing cups. Not to mention the rapid loss of coffee powder ...

It's already 01:30 in the morning. Later I'll have my hands full. Four men want to eat and I have also my 4 children. Most of the time there are also 2-3 Albanian friends for lunch. Turbulent times in my little kitchen. For supper I would like to prepare pizza when Wolfgang Köcher comes. We are really looking forward to meet him! But for now I'll close ...



1996 - Luisa, Arnold, Linda, Eva, Esther, and Samuel Geiger



2021 - The family with their youngest daughter Clara (2nd from left)

A Childhood Like no Other

Twenty-five years lie between the two pictures above - the Geiger family at the large wooden table where thousands of guests have taken their seats over the years. The four children have grown up now and with nestling Clara came another wonderful addition to the family. We were interested in how the children see their own childhood in retrospect. How did they cope with the sometimes chaotic conditions?

The eldest daughter Linda was in first grade when the family moved to Albania. Now newly married, she works in Germany as a translator for English, Spanish and (of course) Albanian.

„I definitely know that I wouldn't want to exchange my childhood with any other. When I was in Australia, I realized that many of the things that the backpackers found so cool I already knew from Albania (e.g. off-road mountain tours, camping in great nature, living with extraordinary and remarkable people and animals, ...). This made me very grateful that our parents „dragged“ us there.

I think it made me realize what it means to be a stranger, but also what it means to eventually not being perceived as a stranger anymore and become part of a different society and culture. By living with the widest variety of people I have learned to be very open and flexible, and as a result I often get along very quickly with new people I meet.”

The second oldest, Eva, completed her training in Germany as a housekeeping operations manager and is in charge of H&L, breakfast, housekeeping, education and training at the NG Hotel Lindenhof.

„I think we had a wonderful childhood. Varied, exciting and free. Of course, we would often have wished for more attention from our parents, and the chaotic conditions were also annoying at times. But we children were aware from an early age that our parents and the many guests had an important task to fulfill, for which they were 100% committed. It was clear that this also required our contribution, so we gladly went along. I never missed anything.

Very important: We always had each other as brothers and sisters. Even today, although we are (almost all) long grown up, we have a strong bond, we stick together!”

Samuel is married today and has two sons. He works in a leading position at NG in Albania. Luisa also returned to Albania after several years in Germany. Today, she manages the canteen kitchen and the guest house at NG in Buçimas. Clara attends the tenth grade at Nehemia School.

Their stories speak for themselves. Difficult circumstances and many sacrifices have not caused harm, on the contrary: this is what blessing looks like.

My Very Special Bicycle

Lili's little purple bike has a moving story to tell

"I don't feel like myself without my special bicycle," says Lirika Prifti, who for many years served as NG Albania Head of Facilities and Guest Relations Manager. If you have visited NG Albania in Buçimas in recent years, you probably met Lili. She ran the guesthouse for over ten years, among many other responsibilities, and always with a smile on her face. In most weather, her little purple foldable bike was parked by the side of the Headquarters building, and many longtime NG staff would comment that "if the bike is there, so is Lili." As she explained recently, this special bike has NG roots as deep as her own.

It is no ordinary bicycle, and not only because it is so loved. As she tells it, in the early 1990s, when communism ended in Albania, her father, a carpenter by training, had just retired from an arduous career as a miner. This was work he had taken on to support his family. The pension he earned was simply not enough to support a daughter who was studying Albanian language and literature at the University of Elbasan. He heard of a new, German organization that had recently come to Pogradec, and was able to find work with them as a carpenter. That organization was Nehemia Foundation (which would later be known as NG).

As Lili tells it, there were bicycles in one of the aid shipments from Germany, and her father managed to get one. For Lili, it was love at first sight. And for her father, it was also love at first sight. She says she pestered him constantly to give it to her, but he said the same thing she says now: "I don't feel like myself without my bicycle." He rode it everywhere, and it brought this retired miner great joy to have such a nice ride. Meanwhile, Lili was living in the United States with her husband and two small children—but she still remembered that special bike.

Lili and her husband returned to Albania in 2008, and Lili came to work at NG. In 2015, after her father died of lung disease, Lili inherited the bike.



"When I tried to ride it the first time after my father passed away," she says, "I couldn't do it.... It was as if he was still there, riding the bike with me.... I didn't feel like myself.... I was shaking all over, and when I arrived at work, I actually crashed and injured my chin." To this day she has a tiny scar from the crash. Shaken, she gave the bike to a cousin to repair. It took two years, and when it came back it had a big basket, a safety mirror, and a small headlight.

From that time, she rode the bike to work whenever she could. "It's my happy place," she adds, explaining that she loved the quiet and meditative time on her daily ride to work. It was a time to think, to be alone, and to pray. "There's a spot by the lake," she says. "Every time I passed it, I started praying. I feel so much gratitude. I'm grateful for my life, my lovely family, and I will always be grateful for my work at Nehemiah Gateway Albania! This career at NG always provided me with opportunities to learn, challenge myself and grow. I feel blessed!"

Shortly after this article was written, after years of waiting, Lili received a US visa and returned to the United States to live in Michigan with her two adult sons. We wish her great success in this new chapter. She will be sorely missed at NG!



AT A GLANCE



ONE WORLD MEDAL

NG's work is also recognized and appreciated by the authorities. NG and Arnold Geiger have received several commendations for their commitment. In Albania, three honorary citizenships were awarded. Also, the Naim Frasheri Order and the Mother Teresa Order for services to the welfare of the people in Albania. In 2008 Arnold Geiger was awarded the German Federal Cross of Merit.

Just in time for Nehemiah Gateway's 30th anniversary, another distinguished award was added to the list: The One World Medal by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development for outstanding personal commitment to the implementation of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. On October 28, 2021, the medal was awarded by the Federal Minister Dr. Gerd Müller.

KEEP UP TO DATE - EIGHT TIMES A YEAR

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AUTISM AWARENESS TRAINING

In our continued partnership with Rotary Clubs in Estes Park, Colorado (USA), we have been able to conduct three autism awareness trainings with the teachers from around Pogradec schools, as well as teachers of Shkolla NEHEMIA. Dr. Migen Sulaj, one of Albania's leading experts in childhood autism, discussed how to detect autism in children as well as how to work with those children that may be on the autism spectrum.

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